THE WITNESS OF THE

MARTYR'S MIRROR

FOR OUR DAY

By Cornelius Krahn

Bethel College
North Newton, Kansas 67117

THE WITNESS OF THE MARTYR'S MIRROR

JAN LUYKEN

The engraver of the Martyrs' Mirror

The engravings have been taken from the 1685 Dutch edition of the *Martyrs' Mirror.* The engraver-illustrator was the Mennonite, Jan Luyken (1649-1712). The artist, who was treated by Jan Gleysteen in the October 1965 issue of *Mennonite Life* (168-177), has left behind a large collection of works of art. Just a listing of them filled two big volumes.

Luyken's drawings and etchings deal not only with the martyrdom of Christians but include the total range of the Old and New Testament. Other areas to which he has made a very significant contribution are books featuring all aspects of human life and social events. They consist of illustrated poetic narrations. His illustrations devoted to Dutch history in general and particularly the Reformation are also numerous. A total of 3,275 works of art have been preserved and are found in the museums of Amsterdam, London, Vienna, and other cities. The Bethel College Historical Library also has a collection.

These engravings are an excellent testimony of the deep-rooted piety and the artistic ability of the illustrator. In addition to this they reveal that he took out time to study the life and the circumstances under which these witnesses lived, were apprehended, and died. If it had not been for Jan Luyken, the story of those who gave their lives for their faith would have been preserved only by the written word. The engravings reproduced here are a selection from the second part of the Dutch edition of the *Martyrs' Mirror* (1685).

This is a revised reprint of the April, 1967 issue of *Mennonite Life* which was sold out in a short time. This is being published in response to the many requests for a new edition. The publisher is again Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas.

PHOTO CREDITS:
Most of the engravings are by Jan Luyken and reproduced from the Dutch *Martyrs' Mirror,* 1685.

Printing and lay-out by Mennonite Press
North Newton, Kansas 67117

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HERE an early record of the Anabaptist witness is being presented. No attempt has ever been made to reproduce the beautiful Jan Luyken engravings found in *Martyrs' Mirror* of 1685 in this manner. This book is one of the most impressive and startling records of the Anabaptist witness. It was originally published in the Dutch and was translated into the German and English languages. It is still being used by some of the more conservative Mennonites but is almost entirely unknown to the rest with the exception of some scholars. This issue presents an attempt to revive the interest in this unusual illustrated record. ¶ The origin of the *Martyrs' Mirror* goes back to the time when the *Het Offer des Heeren* ("Sacrifice unto the Lord") appeared in 1562. Numerous reprints followed. In 1631 Hans de Ries enlarged the collection. It was reprinted repeatedly and finally in 1660 enlarged by Thieleman J. van Braght presenting the story of the witness of 803 Anabaptist martyrs. Jan Luyken added 103 beautiful etchings to the 1,290 page edition of 1685. Forty-nine engravings are in Part I, which consists of the martyrs prior to the Reformation, and fifty-four are found in Part II devoted to the Anabaptist martyrs. ¶ Most of the forty-six engravings reproduced in this issue were selected from the fifty-four etchings of Part II. (The etchings on the last pages are from other sources). A corresponding text has been selected from the English edition of the *Martyrs' Mirror*. This edition of 1964, published by the Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, was originally published by John F. Funk, Elkhart, Indiana, in 1886. Single-handedly he had this book translated and financed the publication. A brief description pertaining to every illustration can be found in the center column of every left-hand page. The interested reader can find a source for further investigation under every description. A key to the sources is given on page 7. On page 4 the basic sources and additional literature are presented. C.K.

The books shown are some of the various editions of the *Martyrs' Mirror* used in the production of this. On the left is a 1660 Dutch edition of the *Martyrs' Mirror* which has only one engraving which was used under "Christ, the Cross-bearer". The worn, large volume of 1685 is the one from which the Jan Luyken engravings were taken (see also at right). The weight of the book is 17½ pounds and its measurements are 16¾" x 11" x 5." The third volume is a copy of the 1748-49 German edition published at Ephrata, Pennsylvania. The last two copies are the present-day German and the English editions of the *Martyrs' Mirror* still in use in America.

BOOKS USED

The books featured above and described in the caption represent some of the sources which were used to produce this issue of *Mennonite Life*. The titles of the books and others used follow.

Thieleman J. van Braght, *Het Bloedig Tooneel der Doops-gesinde, en Weereloose Christenen . . .* 1660.

Thieleman J. van Braght, *Het Bloedig Tooneel of Martelaers Spiegel der Doopesgesinde of Weereloose Christenen . . .* (Amsterdam, 1685).

Thieleman J. van Braght, *The Bloody Theater or Martyrs' Mirror of the Defenseless Christians,* Who Baptized Only Upon Confession of Faith, and Who Suffered and Died for the Testimony of Jesus Their Saviour, (Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1964).

Thieleman J. van Braght, *Der blutige Schauplatz oder Märtyrer-Spiegel der Taufgesinnten oder Wehrlosen Christen . . .* (Scottdale, Pennsylvania 1962).

P. van Eeghen and J. Ph. van der Kellen, *Het werk van Jan en Casper Luyken* I. (Amsterdam, 1905).

Jan Gleysteen, "The Artist, Jan Luyken," *Mennonite Life* (October, 1965) pp. 168-171.

The following articles of the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* (Scottdale, Pennsylvania) were used and are helpful: "The *Martrys' Mirror*" and others, III 517-529; "Offer der Heeren," IV 22; "Hans de Ries," IV 330 f.

RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTARY READING

Throughout the issue the reader finds in the left-hand column of the left page a brief text from the *Martyrs' Mirror*. The last line under the right side caption pertaining to the individual gives the abbreviated title of the sources, including the text from which the selection was taken. It is easy to locate additional information in the English or German copies of the *Martyrs' Mirror* (note Key to Abbreviations, p. 8)

Another valuable source of information is the four-volume set of the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* which has longer articles and references to sources, not only on every martyr featured in this issue but on all of the martyrs who gave their lives for their faith. In most of the cases the reader will have to look for the information under the first name of the martyr.

Other general books helpful are the following:

Cornelius Krahn and Melvin Gingerich, *The Mennonites. An Introduction to Sources* (Newton, Kansas, 1967).

C. Henry Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites* (Newton, Kansas, 1963).

C. J. Dyck (ed.), *An Introduction to Mennonite History* (Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1967).

P. M. Yoder, *Four Hundred Years With The Ausbund* (Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1964).

For Information and Orders write to:
Mennonite Library and Archives
Information and Research Center
North Newton, Kansas 67117

Toward a Restitution of the Witness

By Cornelius Krahn

Among the most praised, most misunderstood, most frequently mentioned, and almost forgotten aspects of the heritage of the sons and daughters of Menno Simons of our day are the basic views of the early Anabaptists. Various views, doctrines, and ethical concerns have been named as the most basic ingredient of Anabaptism. This is an attempt to point out one characteristic which was among the strongest and most significant features which caused the beginning of the movement, and gave it some lasting characteristics which can be detected even in our day. Unfortunately, today it is often more of a potential and hidden talent than a spiritual sword actually used in daily combat.

The Anabaptists originated as a fellowship of those redeemed by Christ, finding themselves at odds with the world in which they lived. Anabaptism was a part of the Reformation movement, but it was more radical in the application and practice of views initiated by Luther and Zwingli.

Oddly enough, it was in the days when Hitler came to power (1933) that E. Stauffer published a lengthy paper entitled "The Anabaptist Theology of Martyrdom," in a leading German magazine. He pointed out that the suffering for the cause of Christ was as essential for the early Anabaptists as breathing is for all life, and that this conviction pervaded their lives and ran through their literature like a red thread.[1] The martyr literature particularly emphasized this view. The first collection of testimonies of martyrdom was entitled, "Sacrifice unto the Lord" (*Offer des Heeren*).[2] It was understood that the suffering for the witness was natural and a continuation of the life and death struggle of the early Christians. Christ, the cross bearer, expected that his followers take upon themselves the cross and become partakers, not only beneficiaries, of his suffering.

This call to witness and suffer was far from a passive fatalistic attitude of resignation or despair. It was more than a pious and mystic contemplation. It was a most aggressive act of love filled with the conviction and hope that the light will conquer darkness and truth will prevail in the end. The classic expression of this optimism and view was the motto of Balthasar Hubmaier who himself was burned at the stake in Vienna. He said: "Divine truth cannot be killed although it may be apprehended, punished, crowned with thorns, crucified, and placed in a tomb. It will nevertheless arise victoriously on the third day and rule and triumph throughout eternity."

Although the Anabaptists were strongly influenced by mysticism, of which *The Imitation of Christ* was a classic expression, they gave the *Nachfolge* (following Christ) and *Leidsamkeit* (willingness to suffer) a new meaning. They added to it an aggressive spirit of discipleship which did not shrink from any challenge it encountered. This uncompromising Christ-oriented idea of a closely knit fellowship of believers, which functioned as members of the body of Christ under the direction of its head, Christ (Eph. 5:25, 27, 30; I Cor. 12:25, 27), made them bold witnesses.

The Anabaptists believed and practiced a three-fold baptism. First, the believer had to receive the spirit of Christ in the act of regeneration. Secondly, he received water baptism at which time he declared his willingness to follow Christ uncompromisingly, even if he would have to undergo a third baptism, namely a blood baptism.

Not only did the early Anabaptists withdraw from a church when it had lost its message in the rabble of formalities, but they would at times walk into such a church and interrupt the official preacher and ask to be heard as the prophets of old had done. They would not only ask for religious freedom for themselves but also for others. They would ask for fairness and justice for others by giving an oral or written witness, by participating in secret meetings and public marches and any other means which they considered fair and effective.

So severe was the persecution of the Anabaptist witnesses in their day that they were exterminated in some areas and driven from the cities to the valleys of the Alps and into the swamps of the Low Countries. Here they survived but lost the vigor and the dynamic of their early concept and practice of the witness and the suffering as a consequence of it. In many instances, they were out of touch with the rest of the world and their witness consisted of fulfilling the Lord's command "to replenish the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28). The early challenging command to go out as witnesses unto the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8) was no longer heard.

Waves of Christian revivals coming from the outside into the Mennonite fold have brought about great changes. The Great Commission has been revived to some extent, and the desire and will to witness where there is destruction and to help where there is a need are being practiced at times by some. However, generally speaking, the heirs of a great tradition of witnessing have not yet uncovered all parts of their hidden legacy. So often the sons of Menno should be the first to call attention to injustices in their communities and in their country and be consistent in their witness. The days in which *die Stillen im Lande* were grateful

to be left alone should belong to the past. The great heritage of giving an unconditional and uncompromising witness must be recovered and used in all aspects of our life, be that in the Christian fellowship, in the community, or in the nation. Our forebears did not compartmentalize life into the spiritual, social, national, and political spheres. They had only one life and they gave all of it for a total cause, which was the restoration of every aspect of human life in need of the redemption in Christ.

As withdrawn tillers of the soil the descendants of these aggressive witnesses often settled down in quietness. And yet it would not be fair to state that the hidden legacy was never used. The Dutch Mennonites of the eighteenth century administered an expensive relief program among their needy Swiss brethren and did large scale philanthropic and mission work long before Mennonites of other countries accepted such a challenge. By the time of the Crimean War in 1854 Mennonites of Russia voluntarily helped those in distress on the Russian side at the time when Florence Nightingale introduced Red Cross activities on the other side.[3]

The courage of P. M. Friesen is an example of a daring witness in a situation of race discrimination. Friesen was in bed with a high fever when he heard that a mob was ready to massacre the Jews in Sevastopol. He dressed, saying that he had received a "commission" to go and intercede for the persecuted. With difficulty he reached the market square where he listened to speakers enticing the mob against the Jews. He had barely enough strength to climb onto a vehicle and to begin to speak. Convincingly and earnestly he pleaded with the crowd, emphasizing that Christ loved all men and in him all are brothers, loving one another. The crowd dispersed quietly and no Jew was hurt in Sevastopol.[4]

In the beginning of the article the statement was made that we are not sure of our own heritage and therefore our witness today lacks clarity in sound and in effectiveness. On the other hand, we must become aware of the fact that we have already come a long way in recapturing the lost witness. Most of the Mennonites came to America some hundred or two hundred years ago because they were fleeing from involvement in worldly matters. They wanted to maintain a certain "nonconformity" and a "nonresistance." In the land of the free they soon found themselves more involved in the affairs of this world than they had been for a long time. The two world wars speeded up the process of involvement. The October issue of *Mennonite Life* featured mental health services sponsored by Mennonites as a result of the alternative service programs during World War II. The editors of the *Christian Century* (January 11, 1967) took a look at this issue and commented: "To say that men who make that kind of contribution to humanity are less honorable than those who for the sake of conscience served the nation in military posts mocks every Christian value we profess. The nation owes many of the graduates from C.P.S. camps a moral debt it cannot pay and a monetary one it can."

Numerous similar testimonies have been uttered in regard to the worldwide witness of reconstruction and relief work which has been and is being done by hands, hearts, and minds which have been led beyond the traditional concepts of "nonconformity" and "nonresistance" of the *die Stillen im Lande* to a more responsible Christian involvement in the problems and needs of the world around us. The revival of the boldness of faith, the courage of discipleship regardless of the price can only increase in the measure in which we practice our present insights of what Christ wants us to do. Francis of Assisi prayed:

Let me sow love, where there is hatred,
Pardon, where there is injury,
Faith, where there is doubt,
Hope, where there is despair,
Light, where there is darkness,
Joy, where there is sadness.

FOOTNOTES

1. Ethelbert Stauffer, "Taeufertum und Maertyrertheologie," *Zeitschrift fuer Kirchengeschichte* (III, 1933, 545-98); E. Stauffer, "The Anabaptist Theology of Martyrdom," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XIX (1945) 179-214.
2. *Het Offer des Heeren*, in *Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica*, Vol. XII (The Hague, 1910).
3. Cornelius Krahn, "Altruism in Mennonite Life," *Forms and Techniques of Altruistic and Spiritual Growth*, ed., Pitirim A. Sorokin (Boston, 1954) 313.
4. *Ibid.*, 314.

CHRIST, THE CROSS-BEARER

This is the first page of the first edition of the *Martyrs' Mirror* by Thieleman J. van Braght. This only illustration of the edition shows Christ as the witnessing cross-bearer and those following him in martyrdom from the days of the apostles to the time of the publication of the book. The following engravings were made by Jan Luyken for the second edition of the *Martyrs' Mirror* (1681).

Het
Bloedigh Tooneel
Der
DOOPS-GESINDE
EN
WERELOOSE CHRISTENEN,
Die om het getuijghenisse JESV hares saligh-
makers geleden hebben en gedoodt zijn van
CHRISTI tijt af, tot dese onse laeste tijden toe,
Mits gaders
Een beschrijvinge des H. Doops, en anders
stucken vanden godsdienst door alle de
selve tijden geoeffent.
Begrepen in twee boecken.
zijnde
Een Vergrootinge vande voorgaenden Martye-
laers spiegel, uijt vele geloofweerdighe Chro-
nijcken, memorien, getuijghenissen, etc.
door
Thielem: I: van Braght
tot DORDRECHT
by Iacobus Saury Woonende
int Kastel van Gendt int
Jaer 1660.

I. The Witness

Fr. Corn. Is it true? And do you call our mother the holy Roman church, the whore of Babylon? And do you call your hellish, devilish sect of Anabaptists the members, or the true church of Christ? Eh! hear this fine fellow once. Who the devil has taught you this! your accursed Menno Simons, I suppose, * * *

Jac. With your permission, you talk very wickedly. It was not necessary that Menno Simons should have taught us as something new, that the Babylonian whore signifies your mother, the Roman church, since John teaches us enough concerning this in his Apocalypse, or Revelation, in the 14th, 16th, 17th, and 18th chapters.

Fr. Corn. Ah bah! what do you understand about St. John's Apocalypse? at what university did you study? At the loom, I suppose; for I understand that you were nothing but a poor weaver and chandler, before you went around preaching and rebaptizing out here in the Gruthuysbosch. I have attended the university at Louvain, and studied divinity so long, and yet I do not understand anything at all about St. John's Apocalypse; this is a fact.

Jac. Therefore Christ thanked His heavenly Father, that He had revealed and made it known to babes, and hid it from the wise of this world, as is written, Matt. 11:25.

Fr. Corn. Exactly; God has revealed it to the weavers at the loom, to the cobblers on their bench, and to bellows-menders, lantern-tinkers, scissors-grinders, broom makers, thatchers, and all sorts of riff-raff, and poor, filthy, and lousy beggars. And to us ecclesiastics who have studied from our youth, night and day, He has concealed it. Just see how we are tormented. You Anabaptists are certainly fine fellows to understand the holy Scriptures; for before you are rebaptized, you can't tell A from B, but as soon as you are baptized, you can read and write. If the devil and his mother have not a hand in this, I do not understand any thing about you people.

Jac. I can well hear that you do not understand our way of doing; for you ascribe to Satan the grace which God grants our simple converts, when we with all diligence teach them to read.

Fr. Corn. Bah, you certainly have the Scriptures at your finger ends; and delve and root in the accursed, damnable books of your arch-heretic Menno Simons. And therefore you do not know anything of the sacrament of the altar—is this not a fine thing?

Jac. We are satisfied with the simple holy Scriptures; for all that is necessary for us to know for our salvation, we find abundantly contained in them, and we need not to search the doctrines of men.

Jacob de Rore was a prominent leader in Flanders and a weaver by trade. He was baptized by Gillis van Aken in 1554. He traveled widely as an evangelist and was apprehended in Brugge where he was severely cross-examined by the Franciscan monk, Cornelis. In the prison he wrote nineteen letters. The record of the cross-examination and letters constitute one of the best examples of the Anabaptist witness. He was put to death in 1569.

MM D, II 425, E, 774; G, 318; *ME* III, 62; *LEK* I 120, Nr. 737.

Key to Abbreviations

BCHL Bethel College Historical Library.

MM D Thieleman Jansz van Braght, *Het Bloedig Tooneel of Martelaers Spiegel der Doopesgezinde of Weereloose Christenen* . . . (Amsterdam, 1685).

MM E Thieleman Jansz van Braght, *The Bloody Theater or Martyrs' Mirror of the Defenseless Christians,* Who Baptized Only Upon Confession of Faith, and Who Suffered and Died for the Testimony of Jesus Their Saviour, . . . (Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1938).

MM G Thieleman Jansz van Braght, *Der blutige Schauplatz oder Märtyrer-Spiegel der Taufgesinnten oder Wehrlosen Christen* . . . (Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1962).

ME *Mennonite Encyclopedia,* Four volumes, Mennonite Publishing Houses.

LEK P. van Eeghen and J. Ph. van der Kellen, *Het werk van Jan en Casper Luyken* I (Amsterdam, 1905).

In support of infant baptism, Cornelis stated, "We Catholics baptize them upon the faith of the Holy Church, and because they have believing parents; therefore they need not be taught first." Jacob quoted, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16), and "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations baptizing them" (Matthew 28). Here the dialogue between the two ended abruptly and with a finality.

Friar Cornelis. Well, I have no desire to dispute any longer with you. I shall go my way, and let the executioner dispute with you, with a burning fagot... and afterwards the devil in hell, with burning pitch, brimstone, and tar, see.

Jacob. No; for Paul writes (II Corinthians 5:1): "If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Friar Cornelis. Bah! in hell, in hell. Expect nothing else than to go through this temporal fire into the eternal; hell yawns and gasps for your soul you accursed, damned Anabaptists that you are, see.

Most of the martyrs and Anabaptist witnesses of the covenant were simple laborers, many of whom learned to read and write when they accepted the message presented to them. This changed their life completely and gave them the motivation to learn to read, to study the Bible, and to share this experience with others. Their disciplined and covenanted Christian life was as much of a witness in spreading the message as their spoken word. Most impressive, however, was their willingness to seal their witness with their own blood.

At Antwerp three brethren, named Andries Langedul, Mattheus Pottebacker and Lauwerens van der Leyen, were apprehended for the truth. Andries Langedul was apprehended at a time when a meeting had just been held in his house for the preaching of the Word of God. Someone had spied it out, and thus the margrave came there just after the congregation had dispersed, and while Andries was sitting on his porch, reading the Bible. He arrested him on the spot.

It has not come to our knowledge, on what particular day Andries Langedul was apprehended, but he offered up his sacrifice with Mattheus Pottebacker and Lauwerens van der Leyen on Thursday, November the 9th, A. D. 1559, and this not publicly, but they were beheaded in prison, in a place where the other prisoners, of whom there were many at that time, could see it from the windows of their cells.

When Andries knelt down to submit to the sword, he folded his hands, saying: "Father, into thy hands I commend"—but: "I commend my spirit" was not finished, the rapid descent of the sword preventing it. Thus all three were put to death as lambs of Christ for the slaughter.

Andries Langedul was beheaded in the Steen prison of Antwerp, November 8, 1559. He was captured while reading the Bible and taken from his wife who had just been delivered of a child (see illustration).

MM D, II 262; E, 633; G, 195; *ME* I 122; *LEK* 120 II Nr. 728.

The dreadful murdering, burning and killing of the innocent and upright followers of Jesus Christ were not sufficient at this time to deter from the true confession and practice of the Christian faith a certain pious brother and faithful witness of the Lord, named Pieter Pieters Beckjen, by trade a boatman on the Amstel, and so zealous, that at divers times he gathered the little flock of the oppressed pious who lived about Amsterdam, into his boat, in order to edify one another with the Word of God, and to strengthen one another in the accepted faith.

In short, he manifested his zeal in every respect, notwithstanding the cruelty of the rulers of darkness, and this with a sincere and good intention, till finally he was, on that account, denounced to the magistrates of the city of Amsterdam, apprehended, dreadfully tortured, and, at last, when he would not apostatize, sentenced to death, and burnt alive, as appears from the sentence, which, for confirmation of said matter, was faithfully and correctly sent to us from the hands of the secretary there. In it can be seen, on the one hand, the steadfast confession of this martyr, and on the other hand, how awfully the rulers of darkness misinterpreted the same, and construed it to an evil, shameful and terrible end.

Pieter Pietersz (Beckjen) was burned at the stake on February 26, 1569, at Amsterdam. Pieter was put to death because he had attended "damned and forbidden meetings of the Mennonites" and had used his ship as a meeting place for the Anabaptists.

MM D, II 385; E, 738; G, 288; *ME* IV, 172; *LEK* II 120 Nr. 735.

I. L.

II. Apprehending the Witness

A. D. 1556, or thereabouts, there was in Beverwijk, a brother named Augustine, a baker by trade, who had forsaken the world, and been baptized upon his faith, according to the ordinance of Christ, which the papists could not endure. There was at that time a burgomaster who was very bitter, and filled with perverted zeal, who sometimes said that he would furnish the peat and wood to burn Augustine. The bailiff had said that he should not apprehend Augustine without previously warning him; but he did not keep his word; for he came upon a time when Augustine was at his work, kneading dough. Perceiving him, Augustine attempted to flee, but was instantly seized by his pursuers, and cast into prison; and as he was a man who was much beloved, it greatly grieved the bailiff's wife, who said to her husband: "O you murderer, what have you done!" but all in vain, he had to follow his Lord Jesus as a lamb is led to the slaughter. As he steadfastly adhered to his faith, they passed a cruel sentence on him, namely that he should be tied to a ladder, and thus cast alive into the fire, and burnt.

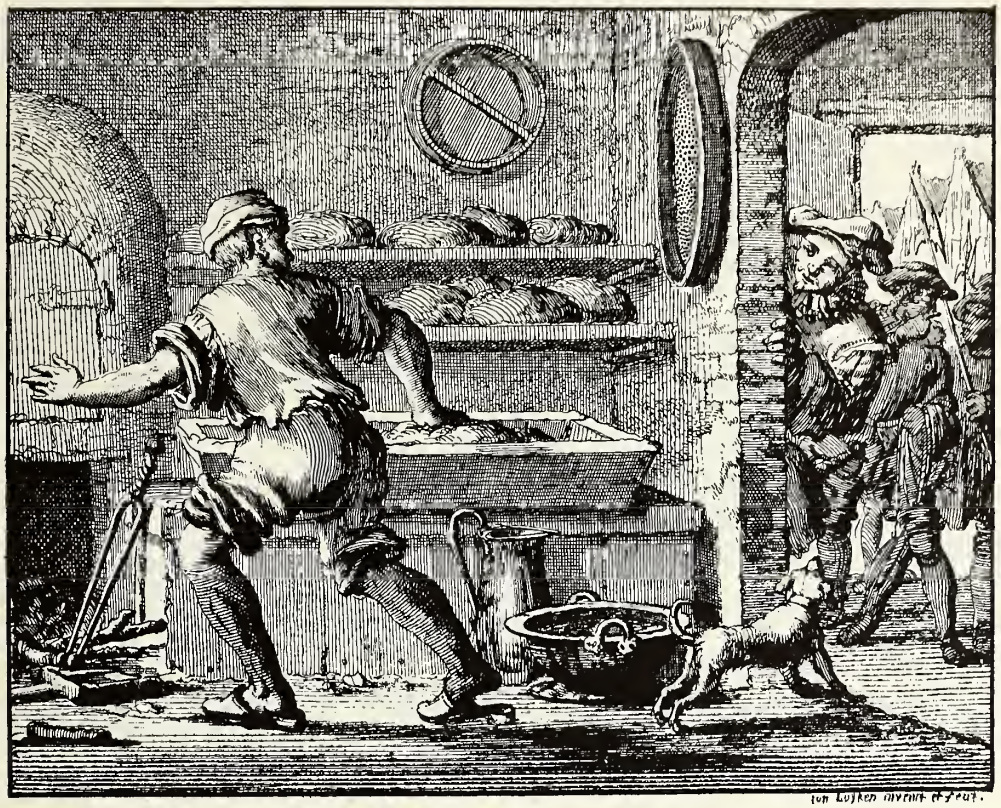
Augustin de Backer was arrested while kneading dough in his bakery at Beverwijk, North Holland. He suffered death by being thrown into a fire tied to a ladder (1556?).

MM D, II 165; E, 553; G, 123; *ME* I, 189; *LEK* II 119 Nr. 720.

About the year 1553 there was at Bergen op Zoom, in Brabant, a shopkeeper, named Simon, who stood in the marketplace, to sell his wares. When the priests passed him with their idol, this Simon did not dare give divine honor to this idol made by human hands (Dan. 3:18), but, according to the testimony of God presented in the holy Scriptures, would worship and serve only the Lord his God. He was therefore apprehended by the maintainers of the Roman antichrist, and examined in the faith, which he freely confessed, rejecting their self-invented infant baptism together with all human commandments, and holding fast only to the testimony of the Word of God; hence he was sentenced to death by the enemies of the truth, and was thus led without the city, and burnt for the testimony of Jesus. Many of the people present were therefore greatly astonished when they beheld the great boldness and steadfastness of this pious witness of God, who thus through grace obtained the crown of eternal life.

Simon den Kramer was burned at the stake in 1553 near Bergen op Zoom in North Brabant because he refused to give homage to the sacrament during a procession as shown in the illustration.

MM D, II 149; E, 540; G, 111; *ME* IV, 528; *LEK* II 119 Nr. 718.



We had appointed to meet together on Sunday morning, to speak of the word of the Lord: for I desired to take leave of the brethren, intending to go on a journey the next day. But the Lord be praised, who had ordered it otherwise. Early in the morning, Hansken went with me to the woods where we were to assemble. We did not find our friends at the place where we expected to meet them. We hunted for them a good half hour, and came to the conclusion that they had not yet come, as there had been a heavy rain the evening before. We were about to turn back, when I said: "Let us go; they may be here ahead of us," and sang softly; that, if they were there, they might hear us. I then heard a rustling in the woods, and said to Hansken: "Our friends are here." We stood still, and looked to see who should come out. Then three men with weapons and sticks came forth.

Thus they apprehended us, saying: "We have caught a great number besides."

We then saw a whole wagon full of our brethren sitting bound, and three judges with all their servants, a great number, who guarded them. When we came to them, we saluted our brethren with the peace of the Lord, and comforted them with His words, boldly to contend for His name.

Hans van Overdam was executed at Gent on July 9, 1551. He had been baptized by Gillis van Aken and was a very active and courageous witness, even addressing the crowd assembled around the place of execution.

MM D, II 89; E, 486; G, 72; *ME* II, 651; *LEK* II 119 Nr. 713.

In said year, 1539, the church having dwelt for a little while at Steinborn, in Austria, and having begun to increase there, the old serpent, the envious and arch-wicked satan, who so miserably tormented the pious, could not endure or overlook it, but in his wrath stirred up the children of wickedness, especially the priests, who in all this are his agents and executors; so that they constantly filled the ears of King Ferdinand with their unjust accusations of the pious, and instigated him, so that he complied with their demand, and sent his Marshal from Vienna, with provosts and a number of horsemen, who unexpectedly came to Falkenstein, whence they took with them a great mob, and fell upon the church at Steinborn, on the 6th day of December, in the evening or at night, in the abovementioned year. All the men whom they found, they put into one room, and thus they also did with the women and maidens. With great tumult and noise they kept watch during the night, and brought in all whom they could find.

The imprisoned brethren and sisters made themselves ready to offer up their bodies and lives unto God, whether through fire or through the sword.

In 1539 *Hutterites* were apprehended in Steinabrunn near Nikolsburg in Lower Austria and imprisoned in the Falkenstein castle. Those who refused to give up their faith were to be sold as galley slaves but managed to escape while en route.

MM D, II 47; E, 450; G, 32; *ME*, IV, 624; *LEK* II 119 Nr. 709.

Jan Luyken

Jan Luyken.

In the year 1558, Brother Hans Smit, a minister of the Word of God, was sent forth by the church to seek and gather those that were eager for the truth. Acts 13:3. When he therefore, being divinely called, undertook to travel through the Netherlands, he, together with five brethren and six sisters, was apprehended in the city of Aix-la-Chapelle, on the ninth of January. While they were assembled there in a house, to speak of the Word of God, and were engaged in prayer, many servants and children of Pilate came there in the night through treachery, with spears, halberds, and bare swords, and well provided with ropes and bonds, and surrounded the house, and bound and apprehended these children of God. They even took with them a mother with her infant that lay in the cradle. But the prisoners were valiant and comforted one another, to be undismayed, since they were imprisoned for the truth of God; and being thus of good cheer, they began to sing for joy. They were very soon separately confined, in which the sisters rejoiced, and sang, so that the people were astonished. In the morning they were brought before the judge, who talked with each separately, and then remanded them to prison, when he perceived their steadfastness. However, the next day the minister was again summoned before the lords, that he should tell them, how many he had baptized, who they were and where the church held their meetings. But he told them, that they should know that he would rather lose his life (John 15:13) than by telling this become a traitor, whereupon he was tortured and racked for about a quarter of an hour, to which he willingly submitted, himself taking off his clothes, and going to the rack. When they could accomplish nothing by it, they went away, but soon returned, and said: "You must tell us what we have asked you, or we shall torture you so as to rack your limbs asunder." They also questioned him with regard to infant baptism. He replied that infant baptism was a human institution, and that as such he regarded it, and not as the true Christian baptism.

They also asked him what he thought of the sacrament. He replied, "I think much of it; but that which the priests use is not at all the true supper of Christ, but a piece of idolatry."

Several of the lords said that if these should be put to death, they should leave home. Once the brethren and sisters were all twelve left together from four o'clock in the morning until ten in the evening. They were joyful and of good cheer, and conversed with one another from the Word of God, and began to pray and praise God.

Hans Schmid (Raiffer) was born in Raiffach, Tirol, and was publicly strangled and burned with five others in October 1558 in Aachen. He traveled widely, successfully promoting the Hutterite views. He wrote 35 letters and 15 hymns in prison.

MM D, II 209; E. 589; G, 155; *ME* IV, 462 f; *LEK* II 120 Nr. 725.

The north wind of persecution rose now more and more in the Knonow district, which also appeared in the case of an old sister, named Catharina Mulerin; who having also been apprehended and taken to Zurich, had to suffer much there in prison, for the faith and testimony of Jesus Christ; but was afterwards (as the preceding ones), beyond all hope and expectation, released from bonds.

The Anabaptists in Switzerland were persecuted longer than those in other countries. *Catherina Müller* was imprisoned in Zürich in 1639. The last martyr to die in Switzerland was Hans Landis of the canton of Zürich who was beheaded for his Anabaptist views on September 29, 1614 in Zürich.

MM D, II 812; E, 1111; G, 606; *ME* III, 281; *LEK* I, 121, Nr. 758.

Ian. Luyken, Invenit, & fecit.

III. The Witness Under Torture

Hans Bret, who was about twenty-one years old, and the son of one Thomas Bret, an Englishman, was (besides his daily labor which he performed in the service of his master) very diligently concerned and engaged with the study of the word of the Lord, in which he constantly exercised himself in the morning and evening also, generally, exhorting with edifying, profitable and instructive passages from the holy Scriptures, those with whom he had intercourse, to a virtuous and godly life.

Being brought before the lords and judges, he was asked, whether he had been baptized upon his faith, which he finally confessed and acknowledged, not ashamed of what he had done by the command of his Lord and Master Christ Jesus, though he certainly knew that they did not ask him to be taught of him, but only to get a word from his mouth by which they might sentence him to death. When the lords and criminal judges had heard this Christian confession, they rose up and went to sentence him to death; and having returned from their evil consultation, they pronounced and declared their sentence over this servant of God: that he should publicly be burnt alive at the stake till death should ensue.

When he had received his sentence, he was conducted back to prison, undismayed and of good courage, where he doubtless addressed some Scriptural remarks to the common people, as setting forth the cause of his imprisonment and suffering not to be any evil or crime, but the faith of the pure and saving truth, which the world cannot endure. Romans 10:9.

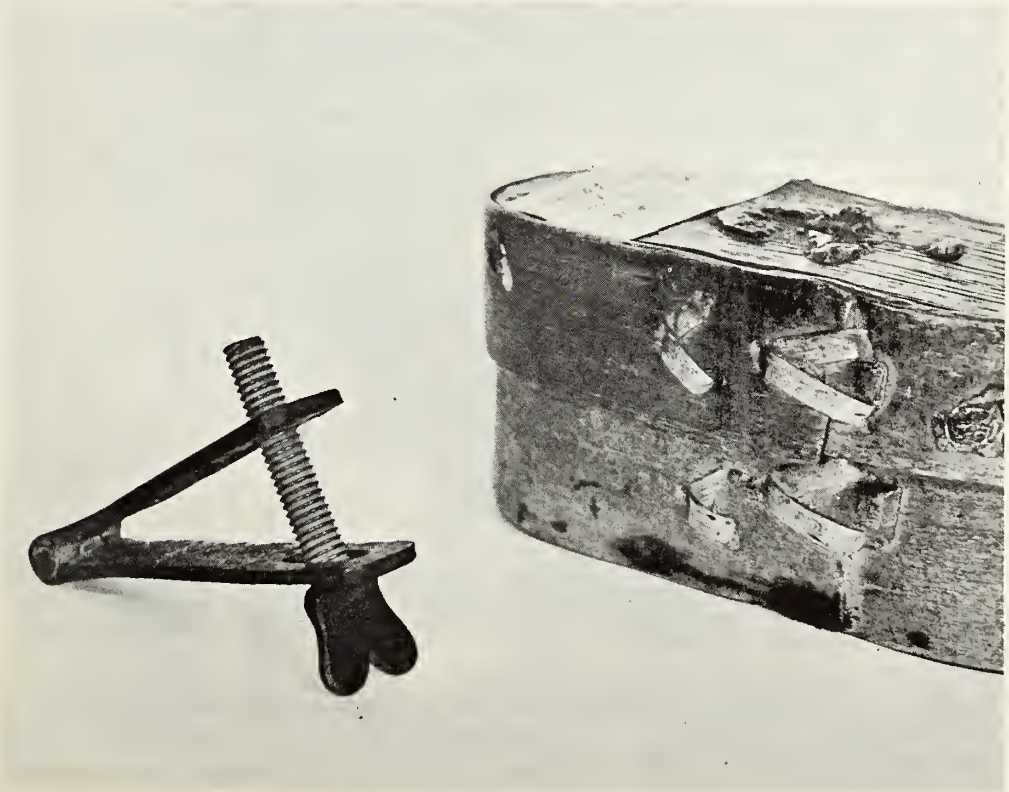
When the executioner had come to him, he commanded him to put out his tongue, which he (faithful and pious servant of God), willingly did, since he had not a member on his body, which he was not willing to deliver up to suffering for the name of Christ, being well assured that all the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the joy and glory which God has promised them that overcome. Matt. 10:22; Romans 8:18; Rev. 2:7.

And when he put out his tongue, the executioner fastened it with a piece of iron, and screwed it very tight with a vise or screw, and then touched the end of the tongue with a hot iron, that swelling, the screw might not slip off or become loose. O bitter cruelty and great tyranny.

Hans Bret was the son of an Englishman at Dortrecht where he was a confectioner. After his apprehension he was examined and died at the stake in Antwerp on January 4, 1577, at the age of 24. A screw which had been put on his tongue to prevent him from witnessing was located in his ashes by Hans de Ries and preserved from generation to generation in Amsterdam (see photograph).

MM D, II 729; E, 1038; G, 543; *ME* II, 648; *LEK* II 121 Nr. 752.

Ian, Luyken, inventt, et fecit.



Geleyn, the shoemaker, was tortured most cruelly of all. They stripped him naked, and suspended him by his right thumb, with a weight attached to his left foot, and while thus suspended he was burned under his arms with candles and fire, and scourged until the two commissaries of the Duke of Alva, who were present, themselves became tired, and went away and sat down to play cards, the executioner looking on, for about an hour, or an hour and a half. Meanwhile Geleyn was left suspended, who, during all the time that they played, experienced no pain, but was as though he had been in a sweet slumber, or in a swoon; yea, he subsequently himself testified that he never in his life rested on his bed with less pain, than while he was suspended there.

When he began to revive again, he was let down; but he implicated no one, nor did he deny his faith, so that he was finally sentenced to the fire with Jan Pieterss and the young apprentice to be burnt alive. When they were standing at the stakes, and were being burned, the flames were wafted away so much from Geleyn, that the executioner had to hold him into the fire with a fork on the other side of the stake. Thus these, valiantly adhering to the truth, laid down their lives for it.

Geleyn Cornelisz of South Holland was seized in a large group of worshipers, most of whom escaped. After brutal torture by Alba's executioners he and five others were burned at the stake on August 7, 1572, at Breda.

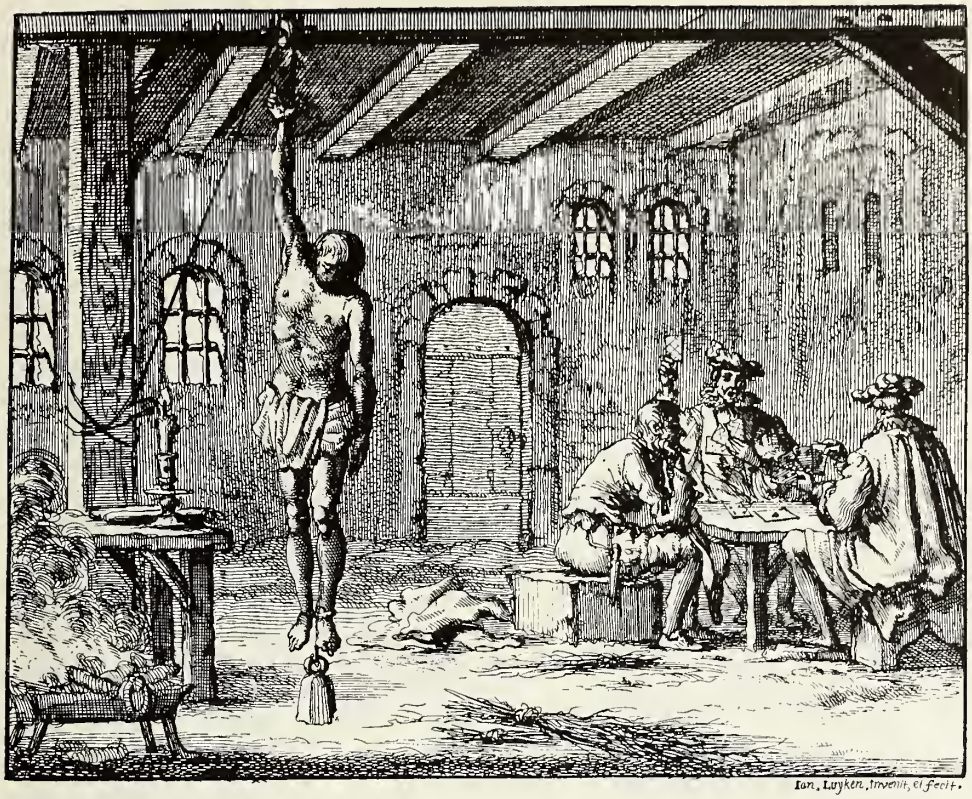
MM D, II 605; E, 930; G, 451; *ME* II, 451; *LEK* I 121 Nr. 746.

During the time of freedom following the destruction of the images, the church at Maestricht grew and flourished, increasing in number. But when the Duke of Alva came into the country, many fled out of the city whithersoever they best could; some, however, remained, among whom there was also a brother who was an elder and also a school teacher. His name was Arent van Essen, and he had a wife whose name was Ursel.

During their imprisonment in the Dinghuys they were frequently assailed by the lords, and also by monks and priests, who sought to move them to renounce their faith; but God preserved His sheep from the terrible rage of the wolves. After this they began first to torture Arent. Yea, it was said, that he was seven times severely tortured, so that he fell into despondency in consequence of all these tortures: but the Lord extended to him His hand, strengthened him, and gave him new courage, so that he manfully fought through, as we shall hear. Ursel his wife was likewise brought from the Dinghuys to the prisoners' gate, where she exhorted her husband not a little, to the strengthening of his heart. There Ursel was also twice tortured on the rack; but she faithfully adhered to the truth. But it did not stop with this torturing in her case; for the executioner tied her hands together, and drew her up, and as she was hanging there he cut open her chemise with a knife baring her back, and severely scourged her with rods; this was done twice in one day.

Arent and Ursula van Essen of Maastricht were apprehended by the bailiffs of Alba with two others. Arent was an elder and schoolteacher. After cruel torture (see Ursula on the illustration) all four were burned at the stake on January 9, 1570.

MM D II 503; E, 842; G, 376; *ME* I, 153; *LEK* I 120 Nr. 739.


Ian. Luyken. invenit, et fecit.

Joh. Luyken invenit, fecit.

IV. The Farewell of the Martyr

The following is the Testament which Anna of Rotterdam left and presented to her son, Isaiah, on the twenty-fourth of January, A. D. 1539, at nine o'clock in the morning, as she was preparing herself to die for the name and the testimony of Jesus, and took leave of her son, at Rotterdam.

Isaiah, receive your testament:

"My son, hear the instruction of your mother; open your ears to hear the words of my mouth. Prov. 1:8. Behold, I go today the way of the prophets, apostles and martyrs, and drink of the cup of which they all have drank. Matt. 20:23.

"This way was trodden by the dead under the altar, who cry, saying: Lord, Almighty God, when wilt Thou avenge the blood that has been shed? White robes were given unto them, and it was said to them; Wait yet for a little season, until the number of your brethren that are yet to be killed for the testimony of Jesus, be fulfilled. Rev. 6:9-11. These also drank of the cup, and are gone above to keep the eternal, holy Sabbath of the Lord. This is the way in which walked the twenty-four elders, who stand before the throne of God, and cast their crowns and harps before the throne of the Lamb, falling down upon their faces, and saying: Lord, unto Thee alone be praise, glory, power, and strength, who shalt avenge the blood of Thy servants and ministers, and shalt through Thyself gain the victory. Great be Thy name, Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. Rev. 4:8, 10.

Anneken Jans (Briel) was baptized with her husband, Arent Jans, at the age of 24 in South Holland. Both of them fled to England in 1536, where her husband died. In 1538 she returned to Holland. Recognized as an Anabaptist by singing a hymn, she was arrested during the same year at Rotterdam. On the way to the place of execution, she asked that someone accept her fifteen-month-old son, Isaiah, whom she carried in her arm. A baker volunteered and raised him. Isaiah became a mayor of Rotterdam.

MM D, 143; E, 453; G, 35; *ME* II 26; *LEK* 119, Nr. 717.

"Behold, all these could not attain to this, without first suffering judgment and chastisement in their flesh; for Christ Jesus, the eternal truth, was the first, when it is written: 'The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world' (Revelation 13:8). So Paul says: 'Thus it pleased the Father, that all whom He predestined from eternity, He called, elected, justified, and made to be conformed to the image of His Son' (Romans 8:29, 30). Our blessed Savior also says: 'The servant is not above his Lord; but it is sufficient for him, that he be like his Lord and Master' (Matthew 10:24)."

"If you, therefore, desire to enter into the regions of the holy world, and into the inheritance of the saints, gird your loins, and follow after them; search the Scriptures, and it shall show you their ways" (John 5:39).

"O Holy Father, sanctify the son of Thy handmaiden in Thy truth, and keep him from the evil, for Thy name's sake, O Lord."

The account concludes "Thereupon she sealed this with her blood, and thus, as a pious heroine and follower of Jesus Christ, she was received among the number of the witnesses of God who were offered up."

Anneken Jans uyt den Briel, verdronken tot Rotterdam, met, en beneffens Chriſtina Michiel Barents van Leuven, op den 23. January, Anno 1539.

Anneken Jans, a Dutch Anabaptist martyr, also known as Anneken wt den Briel, because she once lived there, and also called Anneken van Rotterdam, because she suffered death by martyrdom there, was a follower of David Joris (*q.v.*). According to Nippold (*David Joris,* 56), she had greatly influenced this Anabaptist preacher. As heiress of a considerable fortune, she sacrificed everything for her faith, and at the age of 24, as she herself said, was baptized with her husband, Arent Jans, by a Meynert in their home at Brielle in the Dutch province of South Holland. She fled to England in 1536, where her husband died, and in 1538 returned to Holland in order to settle her affairs and to meet David Joris in Delft. Because she was singing a hymn she was arrested in December 1538 at Rotterdam as she was about to step into the boat for Delft together with her traveling companion and sister in the faith, Christina (*q.v.*). She was charged with sectarianism, openly confessed her faith, and at the age of 28 was drowned in Rotterdam on Jan. 24, 1539. The *Martyrs' Mirror* relates that on her way to the place of execution she addressed a petition to the crowd, asking that someone adopt her 15-month-old son Esaias (Isaiah), to whom she would give a full purse. A baker who had six children volunteered. At home he had to endure his wife's displeasure, but was richly blessed with earthly goods and left great possessions to his children. This Esaias de Lind, Anneken's son, became a mayor of Rotterdam (not Mennonite).

In the summer of 1556 there was in the city of Nimeguen, a faithful brother, named Gerrit Hasepoot, a tailor by trade. Having fled from the city, on account of severe persecution, he secretly returned, since his wife and children were still living there. He was seen by the bailiff's guard, who reported it to their master. The bailiff, a very bloodthirsty man, immediately went after him, and took him with him.

This having taken place, his wife came to him, into the city hall, to speak with him once more, and to take leave and bid her dear husband farewell. She had in her arm an infant, which she could scarcely hold, because of her great grief. When wine was poured out to him, as is customary to do to those sentenced to death (Prov. 31:6), he said to his wife: "I have no desire for this wine; but I hope to drink the new wine, which will be given to me above in the kingdom of my Father." Thus the two separated with great grief, and bade each other adieu in this world; for the woman could hardly stand on her feet any longer, but seemed to fall into a swoon through grief. When he was led to death, and having been brought from the wagon upon the scaffold, he lifted up his voice, and sang the hymn:

"Father in heaven, I call:
Oh, strengthen now my faith."

Gerrit Hasenpoot was a tailor. After apprehension and torture he was visited by his wife, bidding him farewell with an infant in her arms. When the customary wine was offered to him before execution, he told his wife, "I have no desire for this wine; but I hope to drink the good wine which will be given me in the kingdom of my Father." He was burned at the stake in Nijmegen in 1557.

MM D, II 173; E, 560; G, 129; *ME* II 503; *LEK* II 119 Nr. 721.

While Jacob Dircks resided with his family at Antwerp, his wife died there, and he and his aforementioned two sons, though having escaped the hands of the tyrants at Utrecht, subsequently fell into the claws of the wolves at Antwerp, where the trial of their faith was found much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire (I Pet. 1:7); so that they were together condemned to be burnt, each at a stake, only for the divine truth, and living according to it, and not on acount of any crime committed. On their way to death, Jacob Dirck's youngest son, named Pieter Jacobs, met them, who, as he in his great sadness and sorrow, put his arms around his father's neck, was instantly most cruelly seized by the thief-catchers, and thrown under the feet of the people following. With what sorrow the father and the brothers beheld this is easily imagined. When the father and his two sons had each been placed at a stake, he said: "How is it my dear sons?" Each replied: "Very well, my dear father." Andries Jacobs being betrothed at the time, his bride and his sister viewed from a distance with sorrowful hearts and weeping eyes this offering, how their bridegroom and brother, forsaking a temporal bride, and temporal relationship, chose the eternal Bridegroom Christ Jesus above all visible things. Thus these heroes were strangled, each at a stake and then burnt, sealing the truth with their death and blood on the 17th of March 1568.

Jacob Dirksz was a tailor at Utrecht. He fled to Antwerp where he and his two sons, Andries and Hans, were seized. When, on the way to the place of execution, his youngest son, Peter, met them and threw his arms around his father, he was rudely torn away. They were burned on March 17, 1568.

MM D, II 371; E, 724; G, 277; *ME* III 60; *LEK* II 120 Nr. 734.

About the year 1550, it happened in the bishopric of Bamberg, that two young girls espoused and received Christ by faith, were baptized upon their faith, according to the doctrine of Christ, and arising from sin, sought to walk in newness of life with Christ. On this account the antichristians sought to hinder them in this good resolution, and to quench their good intention as much as lay in their power. They therefore cast these two young lambs into prison, where they tortured them with great severity, and sought also with other unchristian means to cause them to apostatize; but as they were firmly built upon Christ, they remained faithful and steadfast during the entire trial. Col. 2:7; Rev. 2:10. Hence, the authorities, who herein generally follow the advice of the false prophets, condemned them to death; at which they were joyful and undaunted. When they were led out to execution, their persecutors, by way of reproach and mockery, placed wreaths of straw upon their heads; whereupon one said to the other: "Since the Lord Christ wore a crown of thorns for us, why should not we wear these crowns of straw in honor of Him? The faithful God shall for this place a beautiful golden crown and glorious wreath upon our heads." Thus these two young branches armed themselves with patience, according to the example of their Captain Jesus, remained faithful unto death, died steadfastly, and obtained, through grace, the glorious crown with God in heaven.

The *Martyrs' Mirror* reports the heroic martyr's death of two unnamed girls in the bishopric of Bamberg in 1550, which made a deep impression on those witnessing their death. Jan Luyken has reproduced this event very realistically in his engraving.

MM D, II 103; E, 500; G, 78; *ME* I 219; *LEK* I 119 Nr. 715.

While Jacques was imprisoned there, his wife came to him, upon which this friend of God was filled with great sorrow and anxiety, beholding her in such exceeding grief since she was also pregnant. The turnkey thrust her from him with great cruelty, but many of the bystanders most heartily wept with her, and entreated the turnkey, saying: "Oh, let her go to him;" but it could not last long. Jacques said to her: "O my beloved, go home, and comfort yourself in the Lord; for I am imprisoned here for the Word of God; and it will tend neither to your shame nor disgrace, since I have injured no one." She said: "May the Lord strengthen you in the truth; for after this conflict there is prepared for you an eternal crown. Oh, that I could die with you, and inherit that blissful life with you, then my heart would rejoice." Jacques said: "O sister in the Lord, let not this grieve you, though I must go a little before you; it is the Lord's will." The turnkey could not bear this, but said: "Begone, quick!" Thereupon Jacques entreated him, saying: "Oh, let us alone with God for a little while." And thus these two dear lambs were separated, but hope to meet again at the resurrection of the just, where wailing and parting will be heard no more forever. Phil. 3:11; Rev. 7:17; 21:4; Isa. 25:8.

Jacques d'Auchy was a merchant who was betrayed to the police at Harlingen. In prison he was visited by his wife. He had a considerable education, had read widely, and was baptized by Leenaert Bouwens in Emden. He wrote a confession and composed a number of songs. He was executed on March 14, 1559, at Leeuwarden.

MM D, II 235; E, 610; G, 158; *ME* III 66; *LEK* II 120 Nr. 726.

V. The Death of the Witness

The Palsgrave, then, in pursuance with the imperial mandate, in a short time, caused about three hundred and fifty persons to be executed for the faith; especially his Burgrave at Altzey, namely Dietrich von Schoenburg, caused many in the town of Altzey to be beheaded, drowned and otherwise put to death; even as the lords who came to the church, and at that time were residents in Altzey, saw themselves how they were taken from the houses in which they were known to be, and led as sheep to the place of execution. They could in no wise be persuaded to apostatize, but went joyfully to meet death; while the others were being drowned, and executed, the rest who were yet alive and waited for death sang until the executioner took them. They were very steadfast in the truth confessed, and, assured in the faith which they had received from God, conducted themselves as valiant soldiers. Matt. 10:22. All the learned and great of this world were confounded by them. I Cor. 1:25, 26.

Some whom they did not wish to execute they tortured and maimed their bodies; of some they cut off the fingers, others they burned crosses on their foreheads, and subjected them to much wanton injury; so that even the aforesaid Burgrave said: "What shall I do? the more I cause to be executed, the more they increase." Ex. 1:22.

Dietrich von Schönberg, burgrave of Alzey, took Anabaptists from their homes like beasts of slaughter, leading them to be executed. Some sources give the number of martyrs as 350, which is questioned by others.

MM D, II 30; E, 437; G, 21; *ME* I, 84; *LEK* II 119 Nr. 708.

Dirk Willems

In the year 1569 a pious, faithful brother and follower of Jesus Christ, named Dirk Willems, was apprehended at Asperen, in Holland, and had to endure severe tyranny from the papists. But as he had founded his faith not upon the drifting sand of human commandments, but upon the firm foundation stone, Christ Jesus, he, notwithstanding all evil winds of human doctrine, and heavy showers of tyrannical and severe persecution, remained immovable and steadfast unto the end; wherefore, when the chief Shepherd shall appear in the clouds of heaven and gather together His elect from all the ends of the earth, he shall also through grace hear the words: "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." I Pet. 5:4; Matt. 24:31; 25:23.

Concerning his apprehension, it is stated by trustworthy persons, that when he fled he was hotly pursued by a thief-catcher, and as there had been some frost, said Dirk Willems ran before over the ice, getting across with considerable peril. The thief-catcher following him broke through, when Dirk Willems, perceiving that the former was in danger of his life, quickly returned and aided him in getting out, and thus saved his life. The thief-catcher wanted to let him go, but the burgomaster, very sternly called to him to consider his oath, and thus he was again seized by the thief-catcher, and, at said place, after severe imprisonment and great trials proceeding from the deceitful papists, put to death at a lingering fire by these bloodthirsty, ravening wolves, enduring it with great steadfastness, and confirming the genuine faith of the truth with his death and blood, as an instructive example to all pious Christians of this time, and to the everlasting disgrace of the tyrannous papists.

Ian Luyken inv et fecit

On the 13th of September, being on a Saturday, early in the morning, these four friends were brought out and, two and two coupled together, led to the great market place before the city hall, where a circle of soldiers had been formed. In the midst there was a hut with four stakes, to which they were tied. Hans Symons and Mattheus went first, and then Cornelis and Christian. While going, Christian said to the people: "Had we been willing to speak lies, we would have escaped this." Mattheus said: "Citizens, that we suffer here, is for the truth, and because we live according to the word of God." Hans Symons exhorted his brethren, not to fear them that kill the body, but him who has power to cast the soul into damnation. And thus they arrived at the place where they were to be offered up: There the executioner's assistant first took Christian, and placed him to a stake in the hut, from where he called to his brethren that were still without, exhorting them to contend valiantly for the truth, who then gave one another the last kiss of peace. Thereupon Cornelis was also placed to a stake, then Mattheus, and finally Hans Symons. The drums were beaten, in order that they should not be heard to speak. The executioner strangled them, and then set fire to the hut, and thus these four friends came to a blessed end, according to the words of the Lord: "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." Matt. 10:22.

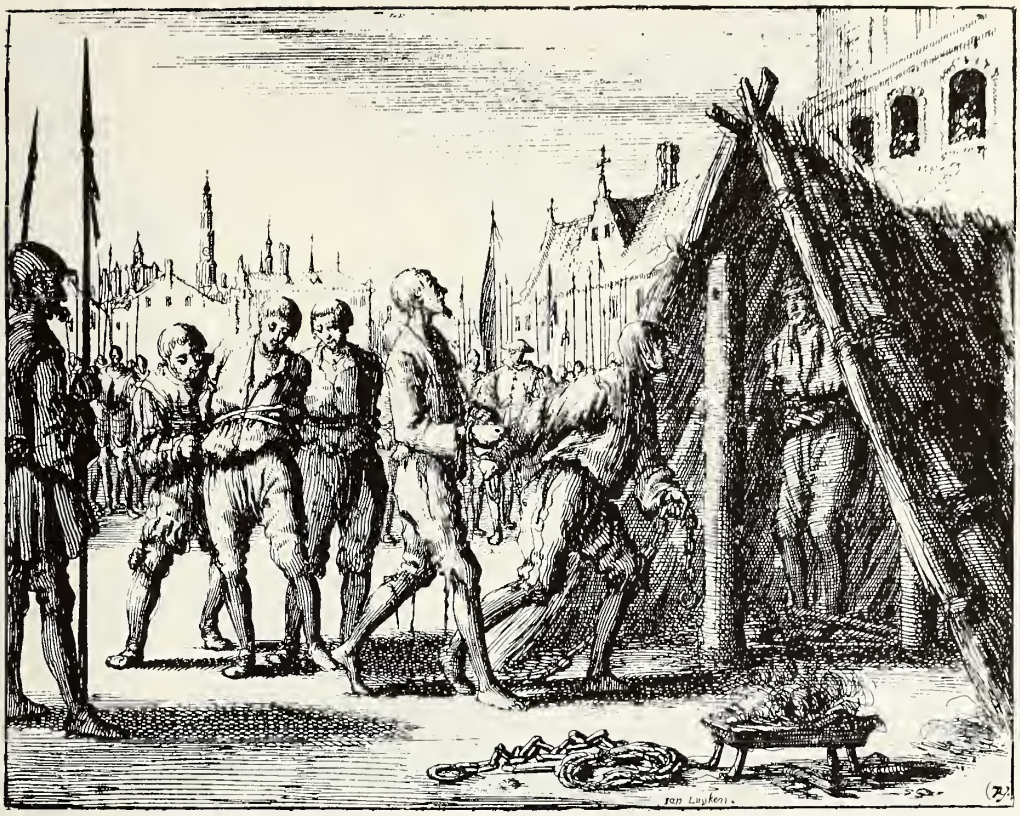
Christiaen Langedul, Cornelis Claess and two others were burned at the stake on September 13, 1567, at Antwerp. They remained steadfast even under terrible tortures.

MM D, II 345; E, 704; G, 257; *ME* I 712; *LEK* I 120 Nr. 733.

When this petty council and the priests had examined him, and he had confessed his faith, and immovably adhered to it, they deemed the case so grave as to be criminal in its nature; hence they delivered him to the lords through the bailiff. These took him, and put him in prison, in which Jan remained for a time in confinement. In the meantime his wife sent him a letter, in which she exhorted him, to be of good cheer in his sufferings, and to adhere faithfully to the truth unto death; which he very thankfully received, comforting, in return, his wife, and exhorting her, and the friends together, that they should adhere to the truth, and continue therein unto the end; he also earnestly requested the prayers of the faithful. He suffered many tortures, because they sought to extort from him who, in the city, were his brethren and fellow believers. But the Lord kept his lips, so that not a single name could be obtained from him, however greatly he was tortured for it.

Jan Bosch (also Durps) was a weaver at Maastricht. Apprehended, he was urged to recant, but remained faithful even under torture. He was burned at the stake on September 23, 1559, at Masstricht, dying with a witness on his lips spoken to the assembled crowd.

MM D, II 259; E, 630; G, 192; *ME* III 73; *LEK* I 120 Nr. 727.



In the year 1550, there were imprisoned in the city of London, in England, two pious witnesses of Jesus, a man by the name of John Knel or Buchner, and a woman named Anna Cantiana; who, among other things, believed and confessed with Menno Simons and all true believers, that the Son of God became man for our sakes, and that He did not receive His humanity from Mary or any other source, but that the eternal Word or Son, became Himself flesh or man. As the afore-mentioned could by no means be brought to apostatize, but would firmly adhere to the truth accepted, they, after suffering many torments, were condemned to death at said place. John Knel was burned the second of May, A. D. 1550. Anna Cantiana was also burned to ashes the same year. According to the testimony of John Fox she was ever ready to render service to others especially to those who were in bonds and imprisonment, with whom she constantly was, to minister to them. And as these above-mentioned martyrs suffered all this for the testimony of Jesus, and not on account of any crime, and steadfastly died for the truth, and were not ashamed of Christ and His word; in this life, before men, He shall also not be ashamed of them before His Father, but, out of grace, bestow upon them and all the blessed, the kingdom prepared for them from the beginning.

Johan Knel was burned at the stake in London together with Anna Cantiana, because they were followers of Menno Simons. They died on May 2, 1550.

MM D, II 99; E, 498; G, 75; *ME* I 123; III 208; *LEK* I 119 Nr. 714.

When the time of suffering drew nigh, Maria said: "Dear sister, heaven is opened for us; for what we now suffer for a little while, we shall forever be happy with our bridegroom." They then gave each other the kiss of peace.

After Maria was burned, they asked Ursula, whether she would not yet apostatize. "No," said she, "not for death; I will not thus forsake the eternal riches." They would also honor her with the sword, but she said: "My flesh is not too good to be burned for the name of Christ." To one of her relatives she said: "Bid John van Beckum good night, and tell him to serve God, to whom I am now about to be offered." When she came to the wood, she clasped her hands, and said: "Our Father which art in heaven." "Yea," said the priest, "there you will find Him." "Because I seek Him there," she said, "I must die this temporal death. If I should confess Him in the bread, I might live longer." When she stepped upon the wood, her foot slipped. "I think I am falling off," she said. "Stop," cried the tyrant; "she means to apostatize." "No," said she, "the block slips from under me; I will not faint in the Word of God, but constantly adhere to Christ." Thus both remained steadfast unto the end, and sealed the Word of God with their death, in great patience and boldness, leaving us a good example.

Maria and Ursula van Beckum belong to the best-known Dutch Anabaptist martyrs. Maria's brother was the nobleman, Jan van Beckum, who was the husband of Ursula. They lived near Deventer. They were burned at the stake on November 13, 1544. There was widespread indignation in connection with this event.

MM D, II 65; E, 467; G, 49; *ME* I 260; *LEK* I 119 Nr. 711.

Jan Luyken, Inven, et Fecit

These eighteen persons, besides many others, were kindled with zeal in the fear of God, and had turned to God from the world and its idolatry, and been baptized upon faith in Christ, entering upon obedience towards His holy Gospel. This the adversaries could not endure; these eighteen were therefore apprehended, and finally, as they, under many tortures, piously adhered to their faith, were all sentenced to the fire, and burned, on the same day, at Salzburg, about the year 1528. They left the following as a memorial:

"O God of heaven, watch over Thy sheep: who are such a little flock, that they may not depart from Thee, or be led astray. Keep them under Thy protection, and deliver them from this lamentable distress; for the beast pursues them even unto death, which they must suffer, for they are thrown into severe prisons, where they, in the death of the dungeon, sing praises unto the Lord, and magnify Him with heart and mouth. Acts 16:25.

"And is that which has been witnessed at Salzburg not a lamentable matter; namely, that eighteen persons were burned together on the same day, only for the doctrine of Christ, whom they confessed to be the only Lord? They would not honor the image, nor worship the beast. They would not receive their words, nor the mark of antichrist into their hand or on their forehead. Therefore they could neither buy nor sell in the land; but they adhered to Christ, and received His mark, and their names are written in the book of life (Ps. 69:28); as Christian soldiers they, through grace, obtained the crown." II Tim. 4:8.

Thus they were burned with fire, and are now awaiting everlasting joy.

Eighteen Anabaptists were apprehended and burned at Salzburg in 1528.

MM D, II 17; E, 427; G, 12; *ME* IV 409; *LEK* I 119 Nr. 706.

In the year 1542, Brother Leonard Bernkop was apprehended for the faith, at Salzburg. Much was tried to induce him to apostatize, but as he steadfastly persevered in the narrow way of the truth of God, and there was no hope that he would apostatize, they condemned him to death, led him out to the place of execution, and built a fire close to him, at which they immediately roasted him; but he adhered firmly to the Lord, and said to the bloodhounds and executioners: "This side is roasted enough; turn me around, and scorch and roast also the other; for through the power of God this suffering is insignificant in comparison with the eternal." Rom. 8:18. Thus he gained the victory over the beast and his image, over the abomination of desolation and his mark. Rev. 15:2. Rather than receive his mark, or do aught which was contrary to God His heavenly Father, he, like the seven valiant and God-fearing sons (II Macc. 7), gave his body to be roasted and executed by fire, which could in no wise separate him from the love of God (Rom. 8:39),

Leonhard Bernkopff was burned at the stake in 1542 at Salzburg because he remained faithful to his beliefs.

MM D, II 63; E, 465; G, 48; *ME* I 299; *LEK* I 119 Nr. 710.

When, on the 26th of April 1557, the above-mentioned Joriaen and Clement were brought forth to death, the common people greatly commiserated them; but they said: "Weep not for us, but for your sins, and repent truly." After they had offered up their prayer to God with a fervent heart, each was placed at a stake, and they said: "We suffer not for evildoing, but only for the obedience of the truth." And having, with a firm trust, commended their spirits or souls into the hands of God, they courageously offered their necks for the truth, and were first strangled, and then burnt; and thus they, to the consolation and joy of many pious persons, continued steadfast unto the end in the accepted truth of the holy Gospel.

When they had finished their tyranny by strangling and burning, they, in order to quench their doctrine, also thought to burn their books (for as old writers tell us, Joriaen Simons was engaged in selling books); but when the books were perceived to be on fire, there arose such an uproar among the people, that the lords took to flight, whereupon the books were thrown among the multitude, who reached for them with eagerness; so that, through divine providence, the truth, instead of being quenched, as it was sought to do, was spread the more, by the reading of so great a number of these books.

Joriaen Simonsz was burned at the stake at Haarlem, North Holland, on April 26, 1557, together with Clement Dirksz. Joriaen was a weaver and/or book seller. Officials wanted to burn his forbidden books with him, but were prevented by the crowd which eagerly took possession of them (see illustration).

MM D, II 179; E, 564; G, 138; *ME* III 122; *LEK* I 119 Nr. 722.

The oldest son of the afore-mentioned martyress, named Adriaen Wens, aged about fifteen years, could not stay away from the place of execution on the day on which his dear mother was offered up; hence he took his youngest little brother, named Hans (or Jan) Mattheus Wens, who was about three years old, upon his arm and went and stood with him somewhere upon a bench, not far from the stakes erected, to behold his mother's death.

But when she was brought forth and placed at the stake, he lost consciousness, fell to the ground, and remained in this condition until his mother and the rest were burnt. Afterwards, when the people had gone away, having regained consciousness, he went to the place where his mother had been burnt, and hunted in the ashes, in which he found the screw with which her tongue had been screwed fast, which he kept in remembrance of her.

Mayken Wens was burned at the stake at Antwerp on October 6, 1573. She wrote a number of letters to her husband and sons. The illustration shows how a son searches the ashes to find the tongue screw which had been placed on his mother's tongue to prevent her from witnessing during the execution (see also page 65).

MM D, II 661; E, 980; G, 495; *ME* III 439; *LEK* I 121 Nr. 749.

Jan. Luyken. Invenit. et Fecit.

The authorities tormented her for three days in succession, but could not induce her to forsake her faith, since she would adhere to Christ; for according to the Scriptures, no one is ever confounded, who fears God from the heart. The bailiff entreated her to go to church and he would release her, and give her her board for a whole year; but she would not consent, but desired to adhere to Christ, and to give her life for His sake; whereupon she was condemned to be drowned.

On the way, Maria said: "I have been the bride of a man; but today I hope to be the bride of Christ, and to inherit His kingdom with Him." As they approached the water, one of the hypocrites said: "O Maria, repent, or it will not go well with you." At the water, they delayed with her over two hours, thinking that they could induce her to apostatize, forsake the truth, and follow them. Thereupon Maria said: "I adhere to my God; proceed with what you have come here for; the wheat is in the straw; it must be threshed, so the Word of God has begun, and must be finished." With this, she undressed, willingly surrendered herself, and said: "O heavenly Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," and was thus drowned, and died, confessing the name of God, and sealing it with her death to the consolation of all believers.

Maria of Montjoie, Eifel Mountains, Germany, resisted all pleas and threats to give up her faith. On the way to the place of execution, she sang cheerfully and said, "I have been the bride of a man, but today I hope to be the bride of Christ." She was drowned in 1552 after an imprisonment lasting nearly two years.

MM D, II 131; E, 525; G, 100; *ME* III 480; *LEK* I 119 Nr. 716.

In this year 1571, Brother Wolfgang Pinder was apprehended through treachery, at Scharding, in Bavaria.

Once two priests came to said brother; one of them talked with him, and admonished him to forsake his error and be converted; but brother Wolfgang, though still suffering great pain from the torturing and racking, said to him with a manful heart: "O you priest, do repent, and turn from your sinful life, and false doctrine; for you are a false prophet, and one of the rogues that go about in sheep's clothing, and cover their deceitfulness and rascality with long robes; but inwardly you are ravening wolves, upon whom the Lord has pronounced many woes." At this the priest got angry and blushed, as did also the other; and they could not accomplish their purpose with him. Finally they sent him back from Burkhausen to Scharding, where he had originally been apprehended. In both places they tried him hard, but could not accomplish their purpose with him. When he could not be moved, and would not follow their false doctrine, he had to lay down his life. They unexpectedly set a day, and he was taken out early in the morning to be executed, without any judicial sentence, which brother Wolfgang demanded.

Wolfgang Binder was seized in Schärding on the Inn River because of his Hutterite views. He was severely tortured but refused to recant and was beheaded in February, 1571.

MM D, II 540; E, 875; G, 403; *ME* I, 344; *LEK* I 120 Nr. 742.

VI. The Breakdown of the Witness

The Anabaptist movement originated in Switzerland and spread via Strassburg through Melchior Hofmann to the Low Countries. Here the message found a well prepared soil. Nevertheless, the movement encountered very strong opposition. The Low Countries were occupied by a Spanish-Catholic government. Charles V and his son, Philip II, were determined to preserve this outpost for the Catholic Church and their political ambitions. Thus, a most severe inquisition machinery was set up. Already during the Middle Ages, the arm of inquisition suppressed all heresy. All views "deviating from those of the church" were labeled as "heresy." Punishments included whipping, various kinds of torture, and death. Governmental and church authorities cooperated or competed in the rights to prosecute those afflicted with heretical views. It was unthinkable that within one country, under one God, there could be any toleration of deviating religious views. The engravings from

Continued on page 42

The barrell with spikes (a person is inside) was only one instrument of torture among many. The constant persecution by state and church to enforce the traditional faith in "one God, one church and one baptism" caused the spiritual, mental and physical breakdown of many believers. One night a few nonresistant Anabaptists of Amsterdam proclaimed the Lord's "woe" with swords in their hands. Another small group was led to undress in a house, to set the clothes on fire and to proclaim the Lord's approaching judgment on the market square during the night. These spontaneous outbursts were a release of pressure for the few involved, but were also used as an excuse for more severe persecution of all those not involved.

Source: BCHL

the *Martyrs' Mirror* illustrate not only how the Anabaptist message spread in the various countries, but also the severity with which those who accepted it were tortured and punished.

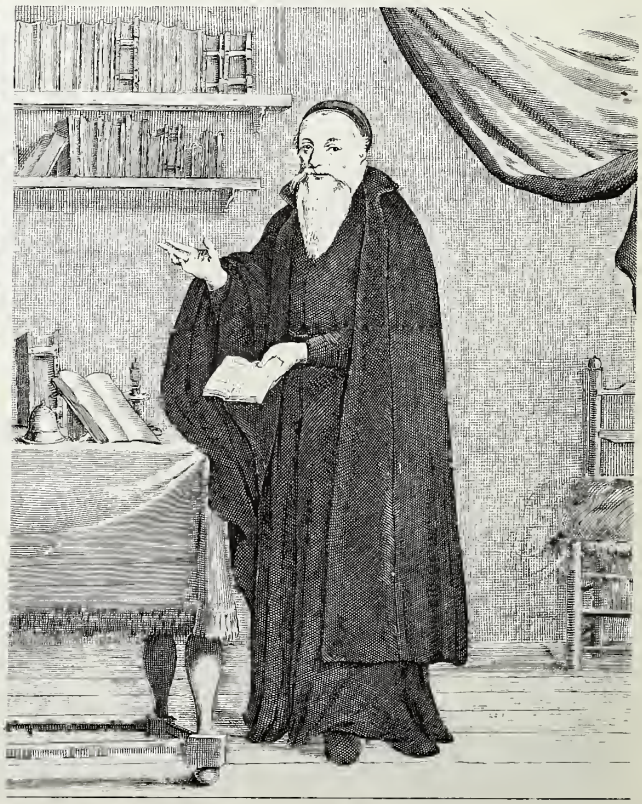
As a rule, the suffering tested, strengthened, and fortified the witness of the faithful believer. With Paul, the suffering witnesses expected the second coming of the Lord within their lifetime. This eschatological hope was strengthened and the expectation heightened as the persecution increased.

After Melchior Hofmann's imprisonment in Strassburg, some persecuted Anabaptists looked longingly for the heavenly Jerusalem where the faithful believers would find a refuge and the Lord would come to establish his kingdom. Various places were named as a possible refuge. A significant role was played by Münster in Westphalia.

The Reformation had been accepted in Münster, particularly through the preaching of Bernhard Rothmann. When the fanatical Dutch leaders, Jan Matthys and Jan van Leyden arrived, they introduced adult baptism and took over the rule of the city with the help of Bernhard Knipperdolling. Soon Jan van Leyden was proclaimed "king of the New Zion." Apostles were sent out to invite the persecuted Anabaptists to come to the chosen city. Thus far, the leaders and the misled follower had hoped that God himself would defend his persecuted children. Now the city was besieged by the bishop and Protestant rulers and the Münsterites made use of the defenses and arms of the city and called on the

East Friesland, Germany

(Below, left) Melchior Hoffman, who transplanted the Anabaptist movement from Strasbourg to Emden, East Friesland. This etching by Christopher van Sichem shows him in prison in Strasbourg. In 1530 he baptized 300 followers in the Emden Reformed Church, starting the Anabaptist movement in the north. The church in which this took place was destroyed during World War II. From here the Anabaptist movement spread to the Netherlands where Menno joined it in 1536. When Menno fled to East Friesland, he found shelter on the estate of Ulrich van Dornum at Oldersum. ***(See page 43.)***



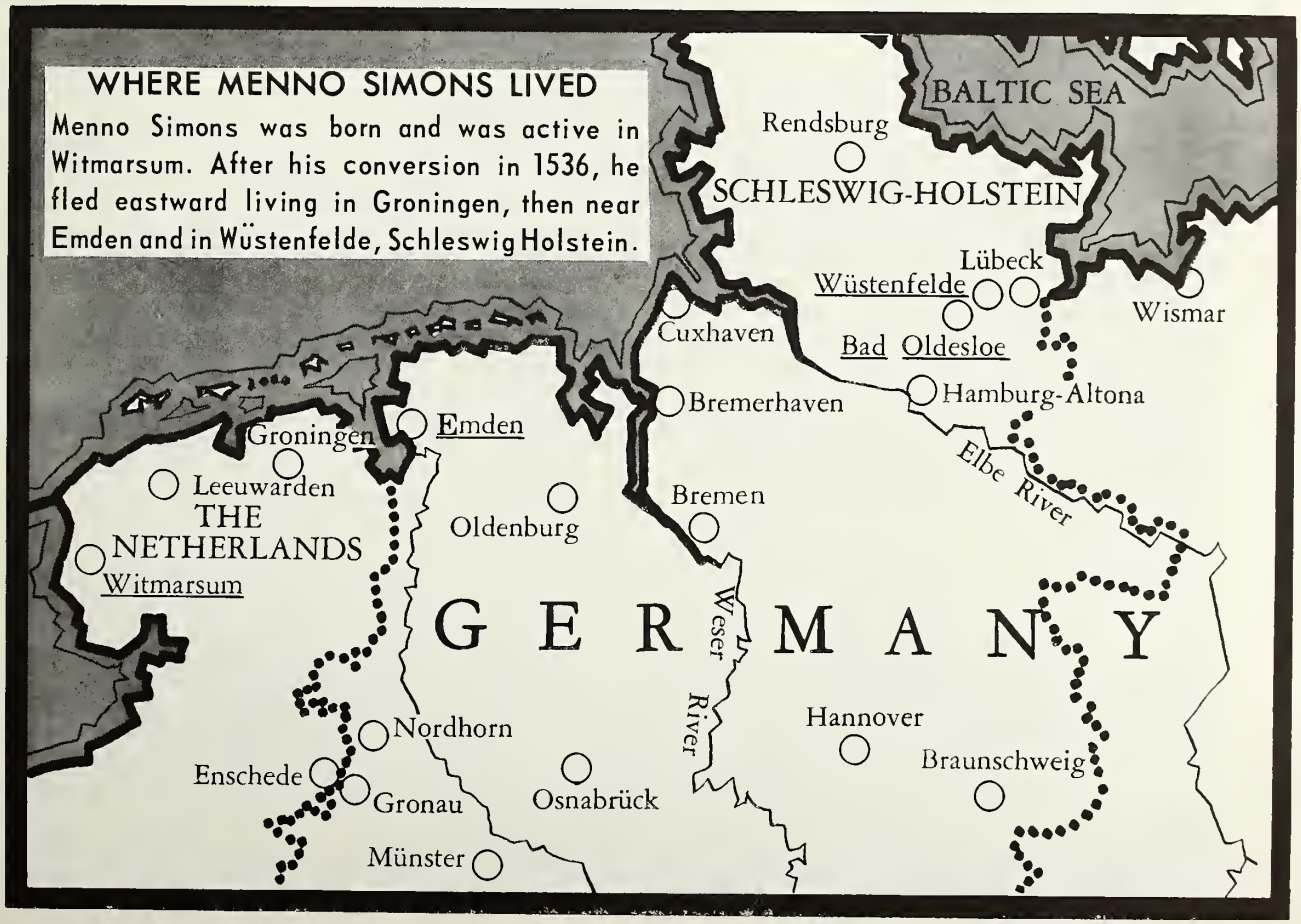
Anabaptists everywhere to come and help them fight the battle of the Lord. The disastrous end came in 1535 when the city was betrayed from within. Similar smaller uprisings occurred in Bolsward, Friesland, and in Amsterdam.

These incidents created a false image of the "revolutionary" character of Anabaptism. In the public mind, the incidents of armed resistance or insurrection overshadowed all favorable characteristics of the early Anabaptist beliefs and witness and tarnished its public image for centuries. The best illustrations of this are the selected engravings taken from contemporary, popular propaganda literature. The inhuman and unbearable torturing and suffering of the persecuted Anabaptists, drove the survivors from the mainstream of life into secluded areas where survival was possible. In Switzerland they went into the mountains; and in the Netherlands, along the Baltic Coast, and at the mouth of the Vistula River, they settled in swampy areas. The suppression and the resulting breakdown of the witness, when some took up arms, only increased the persecution and the withdrawl of the Anabaptists from the mainstream of life. Nevertheless, there were strong voices to be heard all over Europe for many years. The echo can be heard to this day. Outstanding among these voices was Menno Simons who, through preaching and writing, helped with the restitution of the early witness of Anabaptism.

Where Menno Lived and Died

From 1554 to 1561 Menno lived in Wüstenfelde where he died on January 31, 1561, and was buried. Here a marker was put up in 1906. In 1958 the marker received a new bronze plaque contributed by the German student organization and was transferred to the nearby Menno house (cabin) and linden tree.

Now all three markers are together and easily accessible. On the old burial ground a new marker has been placed.



VII. The Restitution of the Witness

Menno Simons (1496-1561) was priest in the village of Witmarsum, Friesland, at the time when Anabaptism spread through the Low Countries. He was influenced by the evangelical movement, read the writings of the reformers, and had accepted some basic evangelical views by the time radical Anabaptism came into his neighborhood. He lost some of his parish members in the Bolsward insurrection. He wrote a strong statement against Jan van Leyden of Münster and other radicals. He even had some discussions with representatives of militant Anabaptism. From his pulpit he warned publicly against their fanaticism. He was fighting on two fronts: against the abuses of the Catholic Church which he served as a priest, and against the fanaticism of radical Anabaptism. Finally, he gave up his position in order to become a shepherd of the persecuted, peaceful, and evangelical Anabaptists whom he gathered, helped, and guided in these crucial days. So significant was his role that his name became attached to the movement when it was referred to in official records as being "Mennonite."

Menno Simons has given us a vivid account of his own observations of the development of Anabaptism while he was undergoing a radical spiritual change which led him to the acceptance of an evangelical faith and ultimately of the leadership of severely persecuted Anabaptism. The latter necessitated his leaving the security of the parish and going into exile. The following is the story of Menno's conversion in his own words.

"Meanwhile it happened, when I had resided [in Witmarsum] about a year, that several launched adult baptism. . . . Next in order the sect of Münster made its appearance, by whom many pious hearts in our quarter were deceived. My soul was much troubled, for I perceived that though they were zealous they erred in doctrine. I did what I could to oppose them by preaching and exhortations, as much as in me was. I conferred twice with one of their leaders, once in private, and once in public. . . .

Afterwards the poor straying sheep who wandered as sheep without a proper shepherd, after many cruel edicts, garrotings, and slaughters, assembled at a place near my place of residence called Oude Klooster [Bolsward]. And alas! through the ungodly doctrines of Münster, and in opposition to the Spirit, Word, and example of Christ, they drew the sword to defend themselves, the sword which the Lord commanded Peter to put in its sheath.

After this had transpired the blood of these people, although misled, fell so hot on my heart that I could not stand it, nor find rest in my soul. I reflected upon my unclean, carnal life, also the hypocritical doctrine and idolatry which I still practiced daily in appearance of godliness, but without relish. I saw that these zealous children, although in error, willingly gave their lives and their estates for their doctrine and faith. And I was one of those who had disclosed to some of them the abominations of the papal system. But I myself continued in my comfortable life and acknowledged abominations simply in order that I might enjoy physical comfort and escape the cross of Christ. . . .

My heart trembled within me. I prayed to God with sighs and tears that He would give to me, a sorrowing sinner, the gift of His grace, create within me a clean heart, and graciously through the merits of the crimson blood of Christ forgive my unclean walk and frivolous easy life and bestow upon me wisdom, spirit, courage, and a manly spirit so that I might preach His exalted and adorable name and holy Word in purity, and make known His truth to His glory.

I began in the name of the Lord to preach publicly from the pulpit the word of true repentance, to point the people to the narrow path, and in the power of the Scripture openly to reprove all sin and wickedness, all idolatry and false worship, and to present the true worship; also the true baptism and the Lord's Supper, according to the doctrine of Christ, to the extent that I had at that time received from God the grace.

I also faithfully warned everyone against the abominations of Münster, condemning king, polygamy, kingdom, sword, etc. After about nine months or so, the gracious Lord granted me His fatherly Spirit, help, and hand. Then I, without constraint, of a sudden, renounced all my worldly reputation, name and fame, my unchristian abominations, my masses, infant baptism, and my easy life, and I willingly submitted to distress and poverty under the heavy cross of Christ. In my weakness I feared God; I sought out the pious and though they were few in number I found some who were zealous and maintained the truth. I dealt

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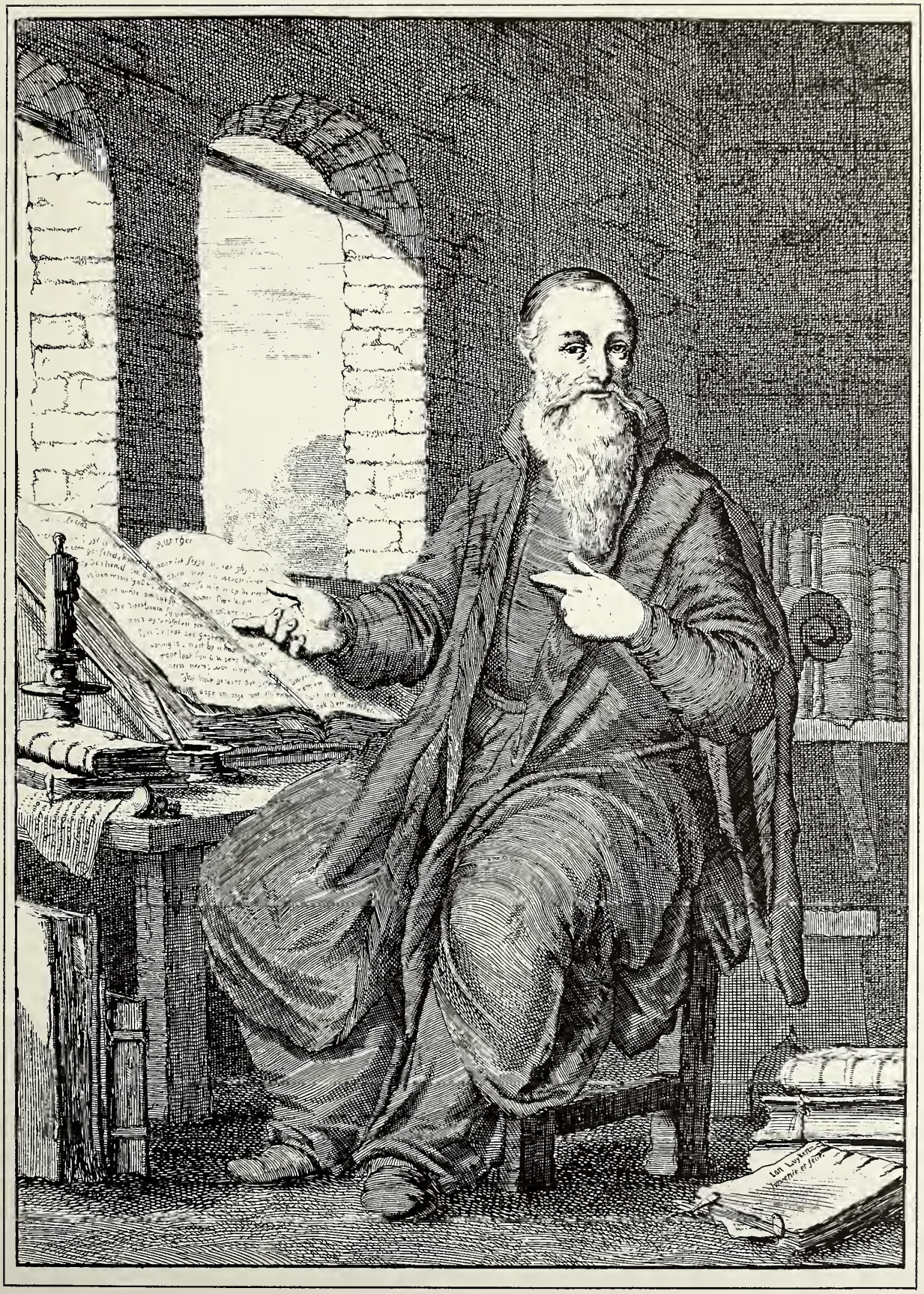
Menno Simons (1496-1561) was a Catholic priest in Witmarsum, Friesland, and was converted by reading the Bible. I Corinthians 3:11 became the foundation on which he gathered the Anabaptists which were scattered like "sheep without a shepherd." His followers became known as Mennonites (Etching by Jan Luyken).

Source: BCHL



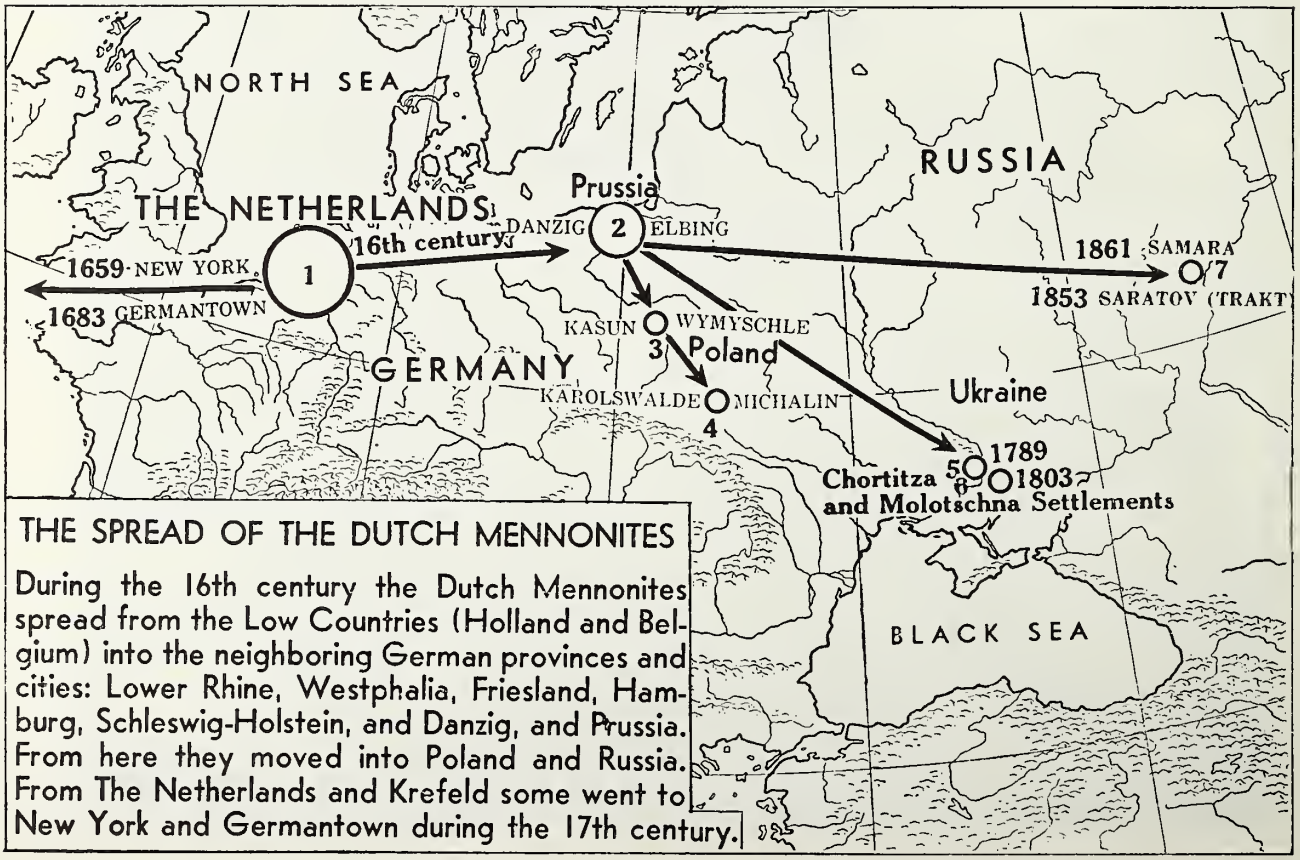
with the erring, and through the help and power of God with His Word, reclaimed them from the snares of damnation and gained them to Christ. The hardened and rebellious I left to the Lord. . . .

It happened about one year after this while I was secretly exercising myself in the Word of God by reading and writing that some six, seven, or eight persons came to me who were of one heart and one soul with me, beyond reproach as far as man can judge in doctrine and life, separated from the world after the witness of Scripture and under the cross, men who sincerely abhorred not only the sect of Münster, but the cursed abominations of all other worldly sects. In the name of those pious souls who were of the same mind and spirit both with themselves and with me, they prayerfully requested me to make the great sufferings and need of the poor oppressed souls my concern, seeing that the hunger was very great and the faithful stewards altogether few. They urged me to put to good use the talents which I, though unworthy, had received from the Lord. . . .

When the persons before mentioned did not desist from their supplications and my own conscience made me somewhat uneasy even in my weakness, because I saw the great hunger and need referred to, then I surrendered myself soul and body to the Lord, and committed myself to His grace, and commended in due time, according to the contents of His holy Word, to teach and to baptize, to till the vineyard of the Lord with my little talent, to build up His holy city and temple and to repair the tumble-down walls."[1]

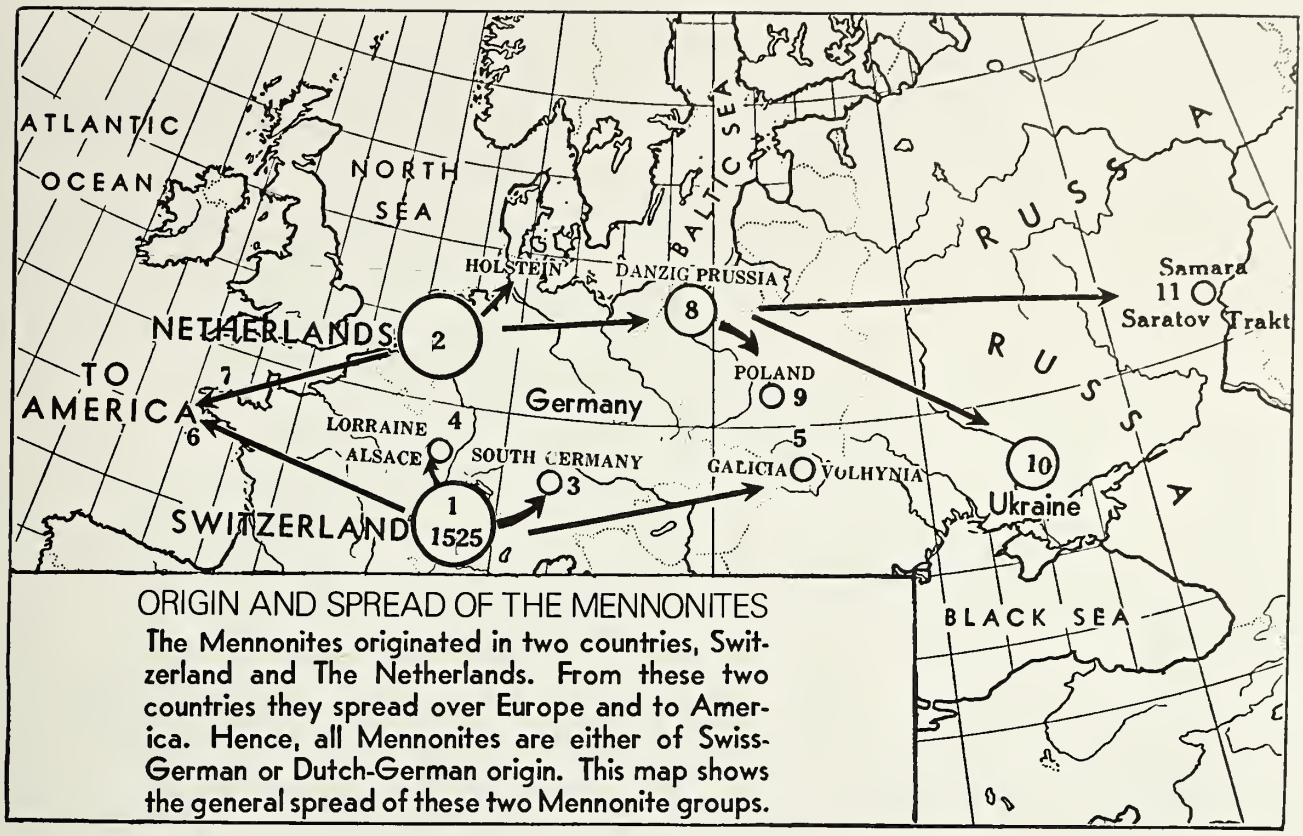
This Menno Simons did in a decisive moment by writing, preaching and courageously risking his life in continuous travel. All of this he did by claiming as his motto: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 3:11).

1. Menno Simons. *The Complete Writings* (Herald Press, Scottdale, Pa., 1956) 668-682.



THE SPREAD OF THE DUTCH MENNONITES

During the 16th century the Dutch Mennonites spread from the Low Countries (Holland and Belgium) into the neighboring German provinces and cities: Lower Rhine, Westphalia, Friesland, Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein, and Danzig, and Prussia. From here they moved into Poland and Russia. From The Netherlands and Krefeld some went to New York and Germantown during the 17th century.



ORIGIN AND SPREAD OF THE MENNONITES

The Mennonites originated in two countries, Switzerland and The Netherlands. From these two countries they spread over Europe and to America. Hence, all Mennonites are either of Swiss-German or Dutch-German origin. This map shows the general spread of these two Mennonite groups.

Symbols and Their Meaning

In closing, an illustration of what a heritage can mean. Years ago a caretaker of a Mennonite cemetery in the prairie states pointed at a grave and said to me: "This one could read the Dutch language." In response to my question how he knew, he answered that "he had a Dutch Bible and a Dutch Martyrs' Mirror and I heard him read in Dutch."

I WENT TO the owner. He was ready to turn this unusual record over to the historical library. After all, pre-school generations of youngsters had admired and paged in the books and damaged some pages. However, all of a sudden he realized that it would be better to check with his father about the disposal of the books. I will never forget the dialogue between father and son and especially the admonishing words of the father. This is, in brief, his speech.

"Son, I'm surprised. These books were in possession of generations of our forefathers. In the days of persecution our forefathers escaped from the Netherlands taking them along as a cherished possession. They used them as a guiding light while living in the Danzig area. They were still significant enough to be used when they settled in Poland 200 years ago. My father, when he came to Kansas 100 years ago, was still reading these cherished books. You and I do not read the Dutch language, but we should be aware of the deeper meaning of this heirloom which guided the path of our forefathers for generations."

I WAS impressed by these words. As long as the antiques have such a spiritual value, they are safe even on a farm, unless they are destroyed by fire or careless handling. Beware, however, of the dollar craze that is inflating the spiritual values of an heirloom for which our forefathers sacrificed in sweat, blood and tears. It takes more than a few pious phrases to restore true value in this respect.

They heard Him say, "Follow Me."